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Gateway Gazette

Volume I, Issue I

Fall 2004

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Put Your Talents to Good Use

The *Gateway Gazette* is holding a contest to find a talented artist or graphic designer to create a logo for our newspaper. The logo should be something that incorporates the name of the newspaper and is representative of Roxbury Community College and its students. The first prize is a \$25 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble, as well as having your work appear on the front page of every issue. Forward submissions to rccnews@roxbury.edu, or drop them off at the Writing Center. The deadline is **Thursday, December 2nd**.

Breaking Down the Walls

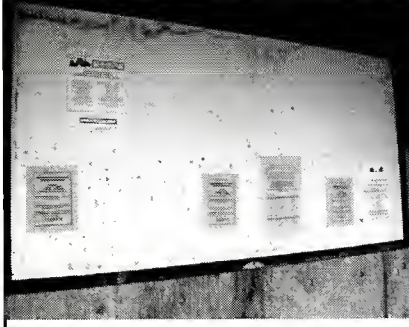
Serene Baldwin

Effective communication is an essential element in almost every aspect of life. In small and large businesses, employers send memos to their employees by either regular mail or e-mail to inform them of any upcoming office-related events. Although the majority of us rely on "word-of-mouth," we are still more inclined to seek written information that contains accuracy and conciseness.

Shouldn't this be the case at RCC?

After all, current students, as well as potential students, would like to know about school-related events

and extracurricular activities that are taking place at the college. And it is not uncommon to see one small, plain-looking flier posted somewhere inside the



Isn't there a better way?

ted flier is not done professionally. There are a series of spelling and grammatical errors, and often the print is too tiny to read. Students are usually heard complaining about this issue. Yet, such a vital issue remains unresolved and only progresses throughout each semester.

If students are the top priority at the college, then why are their pleas ignored?

The *Gateway Gazette* is investigating and trying to solve the communication breakdown at our college. If you have an experience or a suggestion to share, the author can be reached at serene_vue@roxbury.edu.

Photo: Barry Carrias

Even so, the pos-

Summer of Violence: Taking Back the Streets

Daniel Noel

The City of Boston has been infested with murders and homicides; innocent lives are being taken away. The loss of lives have had an enormous effect on those who know

the victims and those who live in the plagued neighborhoods. Some residents living in areas like Dorchester, Mattapan and Roxbury have made decisions to leave the violence behind

and move elsewhere, fearing that their loved ones will be next.

In two months, we will be heading into 2005. So far this year, the city of Boston has

(Continued on page 7)

Gateway Gazette**Editorial Staff**

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 Daniel Noel
 Patrice Rose
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Judy Kahalas
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Welcome to the first issue of the *Gateway Gazette*!

It's exciting to finally launch this project, which has been in the works for more than six months. All of us know that communication at the school can be less than ideal sometimes. At the *Gateway Gazette*, we have committed ourselves to improving the flow of information between administration, faculty and students. We want to tell you the things that you need to know about our college and our communities. We want to provide you with a forum to discuss the issues that affect us all and we want to give you the opportunity to express yourselves creatively. In short, we want to give you a voice.

Our student population is large and diverse, and it is impossible for us to represent all students accurately. This is where you come in. Your feedback and suggestions are essential to help us put out a newspaper that is truly reflective of the student body. What would you like to read about? What questions do you want answered? What opinions do you want expressed?

If you are interested in making a larger contribution, there are many ways. You are welcome to submit articles. You don't have to think you're a great writer; it's more important that your thoughts be clear and strong. If writing really isn't your thing, we're looking for photographers, poets and artists as well. There are other ways you can help, too; we need people to sell advertising, do layout or research, or conduct interviews. Regardless of what you want to do, we can make room for you.

With your help, the *Gateway Gazette* will embody all of us. Let your voices be heard!

-Ann Marie McCarrick

Note: Submission Deadline for the next issue is **Friday, December 3rd**.

To offer feedback
 on this issue or
 get involved with
 the next, e-mail
[rccnews@
 roxbury.edu](mailto:rccnews@roxbury.edu)

A History of Roxbury Community College

Patrice Rose

Roxbury Community College was founded in 1973. It was housed in temporary facilities for approximately fifteen years. Subsequently, the college was moved to its current location on Columbus Avenue. Its location in the historical city of Boston offers students a wide variety of places to see. Lack of transportation is not a problem; students can get around the city on the MBTA system.

Roxbury Community College has the unique distinction of being the only college in New England to serve a

primarily minority-based population. It is a two year, state-supported, coed, liberal arts institution. The college mission is to serve the educational needs of students and give them access to higher education.

Roxbury Community College is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. It awards Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees, as well as certificates in certain disciplines. Its goals are to adequately prepare its

students for a four-year college and/or the workplace. Its facilities include the Academic Building, Student Center, computer laboratories, Writing Center and the Media Complex.

Cultural and social organizations are available such as the African Club, Asian Club, Caribbean Club, Hispanic Club, Haitian Club, Journalism Club, Science Club, Women's Club and Theater Club. Leadership opportunities are also established in the Student Government Association (SGA). Also represented on campus is the Alpha Xi Phi Fraternal Organization and the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

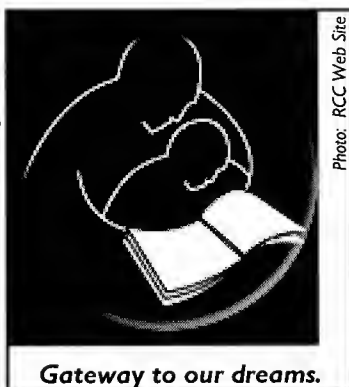


Photo: RCC Web Site

Greetings, fellow RCC Students,

My name is Emmanuel Lafalaise, and I would like to thank you all for electing me as president of Student Government Association of 2004 at Roxbury Community College. Please be assured that I will always keep in mind that you, the RCC student body, are the reason and purpose for me holding this office. Many of you may not know me, but please allow me to share a little bit about myself. I came to the United States of America in 2001 from Haiti. I am the youngest of six children in my family. I am single with no children and employed. My major at RCC is Criminal Justice. After graduation, I plan on attending the University of Massachusetts at Amherst or Northeastern University to major in Political Science. My goal is to be a lawyer.

As your president, I will do everything in my power to make sure that whatever decisions we, or any other entity in the school, make are in the best interests of RCC students. Remember that we all are fighting for the same cause: a more effective curriculum, business and learning environment. It's not a time for us to make life difficult for each other; we must all work together. If you have any comments or suggestions, feel free to drop them off by the Student Government Association at the Student Center, room 317 or at any SGA suggestion box. Everyone is welcome to share his or her ideas.

I have the title of president and you have the power. Make sure to use that power efficiently. Don't let anybody obstruct our way to progress. RCC is our school. Don't let anyone tell you the opposite.

Bear with SGA because RCC is about to change.

Alone we are weak, together we are strong. Together we can do it!

God Bless RCC and all its students,
Emmanuel Lafalaise, SGA President

***Student
Government
Association***

***President
Emmanuel
Lafalaise***

***Vice President
Azure Parker***

***Secretary
Melonie Turner***

***Treasurer
Giselle O'Brady***

***Trustee
Maryann Silva***

When the Assessment Tests Don't Work

Barry Carias

Every year, all incoming RCC freshmen take the assessment tests to determine what level of classes they should enroll in. The system works most of the time, but there are always exceptions. It can't be avoided; some students get put into classes that are either too easy or hard for them. To clarify the issue, I sat down with Ms. Colleen Spence, director of testing and assessment. According to Ms. Spence, all of the tests are made by the RCC faculty except for the math part, which is standardized and used by all community and state colleges in Massachusetts. The tests are adaptive, which means you begin with a mid-level question. When you answer the questions right, the succeeding questions become harder. If you answer them wrong, they become easier in order to measure what level you remember from your past lessons. This system of testing is very effective, but like all other testing methods, it is not perfect.

The testing department is working on different methods to lessen the chances of students ending up in the wrong classes. One of them is sending out letters earlier to incoming freshmen to give them time to prepare for the assessment test, since most students entering RCC have not been in school for a lengthy amount of time. Another is providing the College Survival class. The class does not only aim to help the students who are in the wrong classes, but also to help all students to learn to manage their subjects and course requirements. Teachers encourage new students to take the college survival course to better prepare for college. One reason why the faculty don't notice when students are in the wrong class is because the students don't give feedback or opinions on their current status.

Although the school has the responsibility to help students placed in wrong classes, the students themselves should also take certain steps to help

themselves. The add/drop period was devised for students to drop classes which are too hard or easy for them and take the appropriate classes. If you didn't use this time to switch classes, try and stick with the class you have this semester and enroll in the right one in the spring semester, since it's better than just withdrawing.

Sign Up For A Free RCC

E-mail

Starting this semester, RCC has made it possible for all students to set up an e-mail through the school. Students are encouraged to obtain one of these e-mail addresses since administration will be using them to give students updates about school news. In order to sign up for an RCC e-mail, visit <http://mail.roxbury.edu> and click on "Sign up RoxburyMail now."

Separation of Right and Wrong

Khalil Saddiq

We now live in a time in America known as "Post September 11th," so we owe it not only to ourselves, but also to our family, friends and the greater population, to do whatever is necessary to educate and build safe and successful communities. In the media, religions and the people who follow them have taken center stage amid allegations of wrongdoing and controversy. The majority of the recent focus has been on Muslims and Islam and in particular, the Islamic Society of Boston (ISB).

In the recent accusations, a Roxbury citizen who claims that the purchase of land by the ISB at a discounted price was a violation of separation of church and state has sued the city of Boston. I find it quite strange that such a suit would be filed, in light of the fact that similar transactions have benefited other religious organizations throughout the years. The need to learn about Islam and Muslims has never been more important than now. The ISB is in the middle of building a multi-million dollar Cultural Center next to Roxbury Community College in order to fulfill this need.

This is a key investment, not only to the Roxbury community, but also to Boston and the nation as a whole.

Terrorism is one of the most important topics that we face; the safety of our community is always a concern. The Muslim community recognizes this need. We have the very same concerns; terrorism faces us all. The Cultural Center is a big

OPINIONS AND EDITORIALS

step in fighting terrorism, building community relationships and bringing valuable knowledge about the Muslim world to those who are not familiar with Islam.

The ISB was ambitious in building this Cultural Center and providing community services to Roxbury Community College and community

parks. Since the price of education in this country has risen greatly and the number of jobs has declined, the need for affordable educations through our community colleges has been in high demand. ISB partnered with Roxbury Col-

lege to donate books, help raise money, and give lectures in various subjects. ISB made a commitment for 10 years and left the door open for other such community services.

As Americans, we should be and have a right to be concerned about our safety. Where there are essential questions, there should be equally essential answers. Is the Cultural Center a place where hate, anti-Semitism, and bigotry will be taught and practiced? I say,

"No!" But will the potential cultural center be used as an excuse to allow those same prejudices to thrive against Muslims?

Please Note: The opinions expressed in this newspaper are not necessarily the official views of Roxbury Community College, or its faculty or administration.



The center of the controversy.

Photo: Barry Carrios

"The Cultural Center is a big step in fighting terrorism, building community relationships and bringing valuable knowledge about the Muslim world to those who are not familiar with Islam."

RCC's Neighbor Being Sued

Charity Watkins

A Roxbury resident, who believes that the city is violating the separation of church and state, is suing the city of Boston. The 22 million dollar Islamic Cultural Center and Mosque will be the largest in the northeast. The city cut a complex land deal with the center devel-

"As students of RCC, we need better book resources in our library, but what is the whole truth about the mosque giving us what we need?"

oper that has raised some suspicions. According to the suit, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) took a cash payment of \$175,000 from the center's developers, then made up the rest of the price tag by valuing a series of benefits the developers are granting to Roxbury Community College at almost three hundred thousand dollars. The BRA reviewed the cost of a lecture series that would be conducted at the college at 115 thousand dollars. They also judged the value of an Islamic library of 5,000 volumes lined up for the Community College at \$80,000. The lawsuit also claims that the BRA is handing all authority of the library and lecture series to the Islamic Society of Boston (ISB).

As students of RCC, we need better book resources in our library, but what is the whole truth about the mosque giving us what we need? Is it out of the kindness of the developers' hearts? Or could it be to take over? Whether it is a mosque, church, temple, or any other estate, should they be allowed to get involved with a state property and turn it into church property? For the students and faculty at Roxbury Community College, this could be either an enormous mess or a huge success. You be the judge.

Finding Your Way Around the Library

Ann Marie McCarrick

Mark Lawrence realizes that the library is woefully underfunded. Though it's recommended that any community college library should have 40,000 volumes, the RCC library only has 29,000 that are in usable condition. RCC has the smallest book collection, and yet the highest book circulation per student, out of the 15 community college libraries in Massachusetts. He knows these things—he knows that many of the library's science and technology books are obsolete; he knows that plenty of the textbooks that should be on reserve are missing.

Mark Lawrence understands that the library is ridiculously understaffed. He sees that students often

don't get the information they need about all of the library's resources, and when they do, they don't always understand how to use them.

Fortunately for RCC students, Lawrence, the acting library director, is trying to solve these problems. Despite state budget cuts that have crippled the library's resources, he is working on ways to improve the library's collection and bring it up to date. More than 1,000 books have been added of late in a wide range of the topics that interest students the most. The audio/visual collection has also been supplemented with new materials, and two brand new copy machines will be installed soon as well.

(Continued on page 8)

Brightening Students' Leadership

Othuman Ntale, SGA Representative

Roxbury Community College's student leaders were among the many who participated in the College Students' Leadership Conference. The conference took place from October 7th to 8th at the Leenox Resort in Massachusetts and the theme was "Discovery." It was wonderful for student leaders to acquire new leadership skills to be able to better serve the students from their respective colleges.

Interestingly, the presence of R.C.C. was very significant because it provided diversity, which is highly needed in Massachusetts colleges, as well as in the country at large.

MassVote Teams Up with RCC

On October 12th and 13th, Roxbury Community College hosted a voter registration drive sponsored by Mass Vote. School and community leaders, including State Rep. Byron Rushing, were on hand registering over 80 new voters and educating all students about their rights at the polls.

Almost one hundred percent of the RCC students polled who were citizens were planning to vote in what promises to be a close election of long-lasting significance. In our informal poll, fifty percent of students were planning to vote for Kerry, while half were still undecided. Students expressed concern about Bush's shady politics and his poor track record on minority rights, as well as the situation in Iraq. On the other hand, most students were confident in Kerry's commitment to improving the country.

The event was considered a success. At the end of the day, most students left feeling good about the chance to express their political voices, some for the first time. As Representative Rushing said, "The struggle in this country is democracy for everybody vs. democracy for a few...Be committed to making sure that this country becomes a democracy."

For more information, to be a poll worker in future elections, or to learn your rights as a voter, visit www.massvote.org.

Meskal, An Ethiopian Festival

Mekdis Dama, ESOL Level C

Ethiopians have many traditions and religious festivals. My favorite and the most festive is

Postcards from English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Meskal, a celebration of the cross.

The word "meskal" means cross. Every September 17th on the Ethiopian calendar we celebrate Meskal. This festival commemorates the time that the Cross of Christ was revealed to Empress Helena, the Mother of Constantine the Great. This festival has been celebrated for over 1,600 years.

The capital city of Ethiopia is Addis Ababa and the ceremony here is in Meskal Square, a very huge plaza. The ceremony starts in the early afternoon with a procession bearing flaming torches. The participants are priests and choir members who wear brightly colored vestments. All the members of the city's churches gather with them. There are more than 200

churches, so it is a tremendous gathering. The priests carry huge crosses and they sing special Meskal songs.

They sing about the true cross. During the celebration, people make traditional food: "dabo" which is bread and "tela" which is a kind of drink. All family members and friends share in the food and festivities.

Meskal is amazing! People come from many other countries to see Meskal festivities. To sum up, I have no words strong enough to describe Meskal. It is a wonderful festival and I hope that one day you can see for yourself the wonder of Meskal.

If you are studying ESOL and would like to contribute to the next issue of Gateway Gazette, please give your story to Professor McCormack, care of the Writing Center.

*The next deadline is **December 3rd**.*

Let the Light of Your Words Shine in the Poetry Corner

Compiled by Manu A. Carpenter

"Poetry is the art of rhythmical composition, written or spoken, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative, or elevated thoughts."

This poetry corner was created by the students and for the students, whether you just love the art of poetry or you're a poet or a poetess.

Deeply

Poetess Serene

With you, I feel free
 You watched me lay dormant in my cocoon
 Only to grow into a beautiful butterfly
 Being in your arms gives me a sense of inner peace
 Though I can't call it security
 I have my own identity
 Something that always remains with me
 I am not a simple girl
 Who becomes easily infatuated with the concept of love
 I am complete with or without a man
 I am brand new
 Shedding away remnants of my past
 I sleep with your image in my mind
 Your eyes are hazel
 Sometimes a light gray
 And your handsome face smiles down on me
 Now I can say...
 That I'm deeply in love.
 Looking at you
 From where you're standing beside me
 Feeling the warmth of your hand holding mine
 Listening
 To the steady rhythm of your heartbeat
 As you lay resting and at peace with your surroundings
 We have something truly special
 Something remarkable in all its glory
 We share a connection
 An unbreakable bond
 Your shadow looms above me
 Sheltering me from harm
 This is so fulfilling
 So real
 And I will cherish it
 For eternity.

Poet's Note: "Deeply" is a poem meant to demonstrate that a woman can be in love with a man, but still not lost sight of who she is, in terms of how she is defined as a woman. She isn't defined as a woman according to her marital status. She has her own identity from the very beginning. Being involved in a relationship with a man does not shape her identity. Instead, it is a learning process for her. It is one in which she must know who she is and what she wants out of that relationship, as well as what she wants out of life.

A Good Woman

Unknown

A good woman is proud of herself.
 She respects herself and others.
 She is aware of who she is.
 She neither seeks definition from the person she is with, nor does she expect them to read her mind.
 She is quite capable of articulating her needs.

A good woman is hopeful.
 She is strong enough to make all her dreams come true. She knows love, therefore she gives love.
 She recognizes that her love has great value and must be reciprocated.
 If her love is taken for granted, it soon disappears.

A good woman has a dash of inspiration and a dabble of endurance.
 She knows that she will, at times, have to inspire others to reach the potential God gave them.
 A good woman knows her past, understands her present and moves toward the future.

A good woman knows God.
 She knows that with God the world is her playground,
 but without God she will just be played.
 A good woman does not live in fear of the future because of her past.
 Instead, she understands that her life experiences are merely lessons, meant to bring her closer to self knowledge and unconditional self love.

If there is anyone who wants to be a part of Gateway Gazette's Poetry Corner, send your poems to rccnews@roxbury.edu. Until next time, stay blessed and Let the Light of Your Words Shine!

SUMMER OF VIOLENCE*(Continued from page 1)*

seen over 50 lives lost to violence, most of the deaths caused by guns and knives. What strikes the public the most is that the great majority of these victims are under the age of 21 and are black males: our students, kids and brothers. These are the people who have paid the price for living on the mean streets of Boston, where they do not even get a chance to finish high school, get into college, or become grown adults. Instead, they are given a bullet with their names engraved, which they never even asked for. They are brutally stabbed and beaten to death by their peers, classmates and friends over material items, misunderstandings and other frivolous reasons. Their parents are the ones who are greatly affected as they plan funerals to bury their children instead of planning for their child's bright future of opportunity in the world.

In regard to the youth violence and the need for more voices to be heard, there is a need for people other than the police department to step up. Church youth leaders and pastors played a role earlier in the summer during the height of youth violence. They should continue to be a part of

"People need to make their voices heard and get involved if they do not want certain things happening. If a person remains silent and doesn't speak, then their child may be the next victim."

speaking with the kids of Boston. There should be weekly meetings and seminars for students to attend at their schools to get the

message across about the lives being wasted around them and in their local neighborhoods. Church leaders, students, teachers and people from the streets of Boston need to speak to the young people to let them know that life is precious and shouldn't be taken away. From Mayor Menino to Police Commissioner O'Toole, these people can make great contributions to the city.

Another suggestion can include after-school programs. It seems as though they don't exist anymore or have just expired. Resurrecting these programs can save many young people from the streets of Boston. As you look around today, too many children are just "hanging around" on the corner after school. From Dudley Station, where a 15-year-old boy was stabbed to death on Valentines Day this year, to Ashmont Station, where there have been shootings throughout, many high school students think of these areas as the "cool hangout" spots. In reality, the students are in danger of becoming innocent victims of gun battles between ignorant people who shoot in broad daylight, who could care less that the area holds a majority of children under the age of 18.

Beefing up police presence in local areas is okay and has done its thing, but that is not enough when you have citizens who will kill in broad daylight. The people in the community who care about their neighborhoods must be active, open and attentive in their vicinities. They care about the lives of their children; they should take a step forward and speak out about the issues affecting their community. The community gets upset when the City of Boston issues certain commands or lets the police get away with things, but I honestly believe that if the neighborhood does its fair share, the homicide rate will decrease

and the jobs of the police will be much easier. People need to make their voices heard and get involved if they do not want certain things happening. If a person remains silent and doesn't speak, then their child may be the next victim.

"These are the people who have paid the price for living on the mean streets of Boston, where they do not even get a chance to finish high school, get into college, or become grown adults. Instead, they are given a bullet with their names engraved, which they never even asked for."

Something has to be done in order to make Boston's streets safe and free of violence. Just bulking up police awareness around public areas is not the only solution. More steps must be taken in order to save a loved one from being the next victim. The fact that kids are killing each other with deadly weapons is frightening. The fact that children under the age of 21 are carrying guns and knives to hurt other people for foolish reasons needs to be addressed by the public. During the past summer, church members started to get involved as the number of homicides increased. They are needed greatly, as are parents, teachers and role models. Everyone needs to wake up and take responsibility. No one should rest or feel comfortable until we turn the spiral of violence into a living vision of peace and brotherhood.

The author can be reached at danielnoel@roxbury.edu.

LIBRARY

(Continued from page 5)

Though understaffing still continues to be a problem, students should be heartened by the fact that a new reference desk was added over the summer, and librarian Kelly Jo Woodside is on hand until early afternoon to help students get started on research projects.

But if you still can't find what you're looking for, you are urged to be proactive in exploring the library's resources. The library offers services beyond books, including audio/visual materials, periodicals and online databases. In fact, the online databases are a strong point, since there are forty of them,

which span from specialized encyclopedias to newspapers from all over the country to Microsoft's financial reports to electronic books. They can even be accessed from an off-campus computer via the number located on the back of student IDs. The problem is that few people know how to use them, although tutorials are located on the library's web site, and staff are willing to aid students and faculty both; professors can sign their classes up for one of 75 yearly trainings on the databases.

The director is also trying to improve school-wide communication. He plans to send out a bimonthly newsletter to student e-mails, letting us all know

what's new at the library and what we should know about. The newsletter can be found on the website, which also has guides to research and library resources.

In the spring of 2004, Student Government sponsored a poll of RCC students. The poll determined that, out of all the campus services offered by the school, it was the library that ranked the highest in "positive impact" on the students, with a score of 78.2%. With the director and staff persisting in finding ways to improve the library, that score will only continue to climb.

Visit the library's web site at <http://www.rcc.mass.edu/Lib/default.html>.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Donations Needed for Liberal Arts Auction

The Liberal Arts Division Annual Award was created after the events of September 11, 2001, to provide scholarships for academically talented students at Roxbury Community College who came from countries devastated by war or terrorism. The faculty raises funds through an annual Silent Auction held each December that is supported by donations from the Roxbury Community College faculty, staff, and administration and local merchants, restaurants, service providers, and public personalities.

Sufficient funds were raised and our criteria have evolved to become more inclusive of our student body. Students who have identified the Liberal Arts as their major and who plan a career in the liberal arts have been awarded \$1,000 scholarships based on academic excellence, community and campus involvement. This year, if sufficient funds are raised, we hope to extend the awards to allow all students at RCC an opportunity to apply for the scholarships. We are asking all faculty members and students who would like to help in our fundraising efforts to contact us so that we can make this year's auction our best ever.

Judy Kahalas, Chair: Ext. 5491 jkahalas@rcc.mass.edu
Veronica McCormack, Co-Chair, Ext. 5127
Susan Black, Co-Chair, Ext. 5491

-Judy Kahalas

The Student Government Association reminds all students that they are always welcome to attend SGA meetings which take place Tuesdays at 11:30 AM in Room 319 of the Student Center.

Congratulations Boston Red Sox, 2004 World Series Champions!

Biology II Tutor Needed...

...To help a student with a disability study 1-2 hours a week. If you're interested, please contact Linda O'Connor at loconn@rcc.mass.edu.

SGA Thanksgiving Can Drive

The Student Government Association will be holding a canned goods drive from November 2nd-16th. Donations will be accepted on the 1st floor of the Academic Building. More information will be posted around the school as it becomes available. Stay tuned!

Invitation for College Students

St. Paul A.M.E. Church has invited all college students to its College Fellowship Student Welcome Dinner on Sunday, November 7th, at 1 PM. This free event will take place on the lower level of St. Paul A.M.E. Church in Bright Hall. The address is 37 Bishop Richard Allen Drive in Cambridge. Please RSVP to Beth Burris at 617-983-8459, or Shayla Donald at sdonald19@hotmail.com.

LOOK FOR OUR NEXT ISSUE DURING THE WEEK BEFORE FINALS